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DEPT FOR D, AF/FO, AF/SPG, IO, AND AF/RSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/20/2016

TAGS: PREL KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: SUDAN OPPOSES UN PEACE-KEEPING IN DARFUR

Classified By: Charge Cameron Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) During CODEL Pelosi's February 19 meeting with Sudanese Vice President Taha, Congressman Wilson drew attention to President Bush's recent statement in Florida that the size of the peace-keeping force in Darfur should be doubled, with the UN and NATO helping the African Union. Wilson asked for Taha's position on the issue of introducing UN forces into Darfur. (Full report of CODEL Pelosi-Taha meeting to follow SEPTEL.)

¶2. (C) Taha began his general response to the questions posed by asking, &Why should America be so interested in our domestic affairs? After he criticized U.S. policy for being all sticks and no carrots and offered a long, unconvincing exposition of events in Darfur, Rep. Pelosi asked directly if Sudan would be willing to receive a UN, more robust peace-keeping force, as President Bush had suggested.

¶3. (C) Taha replied by asking back, &What would be the end result? Would this be the best way to provide security? Would the UN be more knowledgeable of the situation than the AU force? If it is a question of finance, Taha said, the United States should up its support to those already on the ground. Sudan would have to be convinced of any shift to the UN. People in Sudan question what would be the motive behind a shift away from African forces. Sudanese see clearly that the job can be done better by African forces. If the international community provided more funds, the AU could provide!TQ\*QhQ-4-Qz`\_Q UN force in Darfur. Arman refused. He and Minister for Cabinet Affairs Deng Alor confirmed with FVP Salva Kiir that the SPLM will not oppose a UN peace-keeping force in Darfur.

¶5. (C) Comment: Taha spoke clearly. Until convinced otherwise, Sudan will oppose a UN peace-keeping operation in Darfur. No doubt last week the AU Chairperson of the Commission Konare was given the same message. Although President Bashir has not spoken on the issue, hard-line Islamist elements in the government, like Ghazi, will be busy stoking opposition to any UN force. End Comment.

HUME